

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-07 IO-10 L-03

NSAE-00 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01 SAJ-01 SAM-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 DODE-00 NSC-05 ACDA-05 /082 W

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P R 121535Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0005

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 6111

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BU, GR, RO, YO

SUBJECT: MFA OFFICIALS' VIEWS ON UPCOMING BALKAN
DEPUTY MINISTERS MEETING

REF: ATHENS 5983

1. EMBOFF CALLED ON ALEXANDRE VAYENAS, DEPUTY
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF SOCIALIST STATES OF EUROPE AND
ASIA, TO DEVELOP ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON MEETING
OF BALKAN DEPUTY MINISTERS WHICH WAS PROPOSED BY
PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS AFTER HELSINKI MEETING (REFTEL.
VAYENAS STATED THAT NO FIRM DATE HAS YET BEEN SET FOR
THIS MEETING AND THAT CONTRARY TO PRESS STORY
AUGUST 12, INVITATIONS WILL NOT BE SENT OUT "WITHIN
THE NEXT FEW DAYS". HE SAID THE TIMING OF THE MEETING
DEPENDS LARGELY ON FINDING A "FREE PERIOD", SINCE
THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED
MEETINGS WITHIN NEXT FEW MONTHS TO WHICH OFFICIALS
FROM BALKAN STATES ARE ALREADY COMMITTED.

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2. VAYENAS STATED THAT INVITATIONS WILL BE SENT TO ALL BALKAN STATES -- INCLUDING ALBANIA AND TURKEY -- BUT THAT ONE WILL HAVE TO "WAIT AND SEE" WHAT THE REACTION OF ALBANIA WILL BE. HE NOTED THAT PRIOR TO THE HELSINKI MEETING, THE ATTITUDE OF ALBANIA WAS NEGATIVE REGARDING SUCH CONTACTS SINCE IT REGARDED THEM AS ERODING ITS "INDEPENDENT STANCE". AS FOR TURKEY, HE ASSERTED THAT GOG SINCERELY DESIRES AND HOPES FOR ITS PARTICIPATION. HE STRESSED THAT THE BALKAN MEETING WOULD BE REALIZATION OF PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS' STRONGLY HELD CONVICTION THAT A MULTI-LATERAL APPROACH AMONG BALKAN NATIONS IS PREFERABLE TO A SERIES OF BILATERAL ONES.

3. VAYENAS TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO UNDERLINE THAT THE BALKAN MEETING WOULD BE HELD "WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE GENERAL SPIRIT OF DETENTE NOW EXISTING IN EUROPE-- AND IN THE BALKANS SUB-SECTOR SPECIFICALLY." HE OBVIOUSLY TOOK SPECIAL PRIDE IN POINTING OUT TO EMBOFF THAT THIS INITIATIVE WOULD BE THE FIRST TO "TEST" THE UNDERTAKINGS AND SPIRIT UNDERLYING THE CSCE HELSINKI SUMMIT. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE BALKAN CONFERENCE WOULD COVER SECTORS SUCH AS COMMERCE, ECONOMIC QUESTIONS, ECOLOGY, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, TRANSPORTATION, TEC. HE STRESSED THAT THE MEETING WOULD NOT BE "POLITICAL" IN NATURE. HE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE UNDER SECRETARIES (I.E. DEPUTY MINISTERS) WHO WOULD ATTEND WOULD MOST LIKELY NOT REPEAT NOT BE FROM MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS BUT FROM MINISTRIES RELATED TO ECONOMIC, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL SECTORS. IN THE CASE OF GREECE A LIKELY CANDIDATE MINISTRY WOULD BE THAT OF COORDINATION AND PLANNING.

4. COMMENT. DCM THIS MORNING COVERED MUCH OF THE SAME GROUND WITH MFA'S DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS JOHN TZOUNIS, WHO ESTIMATED THAT BALKAN MEETING, IF AND WHEN IT MATERIALIZED, WOULD PROBABLY OCCUR IN LATE OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER IN ATHENS. HE STATED THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING WOULD BE "TO IDENTIFY AND CONFIDENTIAL

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DEFINE PARTICULAR AREAS IN WHICH COOPERATION WOULD BE POSSIBLE AND USEFUL." LIKE VAYENAS, HE WAS CAREFUL TO SAY THAT GREEKS DID NOT REPEAT NOT EXPECT POLITICAL ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED. IN THE VIEW OF TZOUNIS, THE MOST APPROPRIATE REPRESENTATIVES FOR SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE UNDER SECRETARIES OF STATE FOR ECONOMIC PLANNING.

5. WE JUDGE FROM THE REMARKS OF TZOUNIS AND VAYENAS THAT CARAMANLIS LOOKS ON THIS MEETING AS ANOTHER PIECE OF BALKAN MOOD MUSIC. THUS, WHILE POLITICAL SUBJECTS WILL NOT REPEAT NOT BE DISCUSSED, THE CONTEXT OF CARAMANLIS' INITIATIVE IS BY NO MEANS NON-POLITICAL. AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME, IT IS USEFUL TO CARAMANLIS FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL PURPOSES TO APPEAR IN THE VANGUARD OF THOSE FAVORING BALKAN DETENTE. IT IS ALSO USEFUL FOR CARAMANLIS TO STAY A STEP AHEAD OF THE TURKS IN PROPOSING EXPERIMENTS IN REGIONAL COOPERATION, ESPECIALLY IN THE INNOCUOUS AREAS IN QUESTION. AS MATTERS STAND, IF ANKARA ACCEPTS THE GREEK INVITATION, THE TURKS WILL BE SUPPORTING A GREEK INITIATIVE. IF ANKARA DECLINES TO PARTICIPATE, THE TURKS WILL APPEAR TO BE ISOLATING THEMSELVES.
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